

The Special City Council Meeting of October 2, 2019 was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

**MAYOR**

Phillip A. Howard

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Susan Darst

Jennifer Nottingham

Geri Poss

Sean Skaggs

Kimberly Verity

**OTHERS**

Shannan Kinsley

Joni Baker

Belinda McCall

Chief Rene Rodriguez

Sgt. Scott Ristow

Mitch Thornton

Ann Mabry

Cathy Dobbs

Don Reddout

Jerry Cogill

Margaret Martin

Kelly Luckett

Rebecca M. Galindo

Trish Terrazas

Debbie Swisher

Susan Beavin

Lou Hoffman

Gavan North

Matt Baker

Shane Reddout

Michael Phillips

Donna Gottwald

Joshua Murcay

Ray Linares

Christian Linares

Viki Harden

Denise Newlin

Mayor Howard declared a quorum with all Council members present. The meeting was started with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. RECONSIDER AND ACTION ON OPTIONS FOR C6 TRASH AND RECYCLING PICKUP**

Mayor Howard stated citizens who wish to speak will be limited to 3 minutes each. Three citizens sent in letters that could not attend the meeting this evening.

Mayor Howard read aloud the letter from Sandra L. Schneider dated September 30, 2019. The letter states “The decision of the Council to stop providing general trash and recycling services to the citizens of Grey Forest is short-sighted and irresponsible. This Council is morally and fiscally bound to honor trash services to the utility owners of this community from their utility revenues. The Council’s decision to discontinue paying citizen general trash service out of utility revenues is not good, nor is it understood. This Council decision impacts the infrastructure and well being of this community and citizens and needs to be changed”. (Full letter is available at Grey Forest City Hall).

Mayor Howard read aloud the letter from Lorna M. Main dated October 2, 2019. The letter states “Council has failed to adequately provide notice to Grey Forest citizens regarding this incredibly important issue, one which will negatively and dramatically affect every single individual in the City. Fully cancelling the trash services provided throughout the City is vastly different than ‘considering options’ and should have been clearly communicated to citizens. One of the primary duties of the City Council is to act in the best interests of its citizen by prioritizing their health, safety, and welfare”. She calls on the Council members and Mayor as members of the Grey Forest City Council to uphold their individual and collective fiduciary duties to the Grey Forest citizens they serve, and to continue providing garbage collection services to all citizens. (Full letter is available at Grey Forest City Hall).

Mayor Howard read aloud the letter from Thomas Crick letter dated October 1, 2019. The letter states “Please consider his views on the subject. He has always heard that Grey Forest Utilities share of the profits was used to pay our trash pickup. We could also go to once per week garbage pick up to cut the cost”. (Full letter is available at Grey Forest City Hall).

**Citizens Present**

Mitch Thornton stated his issue is with the principal of it. The benefit is small but is still a benefit. There are citizens in the neighborhood who are on fixed incomes and money will be a problem. He feels all citizens should be treated the same. If there is a benefit for one citizen, then it should be a benefit for all citizens to receive. He asks Council to reconsider their decision.

Don Reddout stated he believes Grey Forest is a unique place and is why most have moved here. He moved to Grey Forest when the gas utility was being put in. Without Jack Nottingham’s dream, we would not have the gas company. There were no paved roads at that time except for Scenic Loop Road. At the top of Jack Nottingham’s list was to pave

roads, lower taxes and give services to the City. Council doesn't have to honor history but that is what the goal was. Grey Forest doesn't have to be like other cities.

Margaret Martin stated she doesn't believe Council is aware of what they will encounter if the City is going to start billing the citizens. Office staff will be the collection agency and the workload will increase immensely. Some people will simply not be able to afford it. Citizens will not pay and will take trash to their businesses. Garbage bills will not be a priority for some citizens. The City paying for the garbage is a need not a luxury. She feels this is a bad nightmare and would like to see it continued.

Trish Terrazas stated she benefits from free trash pickup and appreciates it, but she also understands budgets and the changing requirements of a City. There's office staff, Public Safety, Public Works, street maintenance and so on. She has researched the surrounding areas, and nobody has free trash pickup. Some City's offer assistance to seniors and lower income but not free services.

Gavan North stated he would like to know what prompted this. Was it based on the budget. This has always been an amenity to the community. When does the contract expire. He feels the City needs to run the contract out, see what's out there and then make changes.

Matt Baker stated trash pickup was one of the charms that attracted him to Grey Forest. It would be criminal to take it away. He doesn't want Grey Forest to be like every other City. Citizens don't know what is being done and feels Council needs to be more transparent.

Shane Reddout stated his issue is with the principal of it. It was never discussed during the Budget Workshops or Public Hearing. It was passed in the budget as a line item. He understands the problem with recycling all over the world and has no problem with eliminating recycling but at no time was there an issue with garbage.

Michael Phillips stated his thoughts have been expressed.

Ray Linares stated citizens would be more acceptable to this situation if the services were not cut but scaled down to once a week.

Ann Mabry stated the City has made a lot of improvements. She thanked Council for working on this issue. Due to the underlying problem with recycling, the only thing that can be done right now is for the City to pass up recycling. Billing should be done by C-6, not the City.

Mayor Howard reviewed the trash/recycling timeline and actions:

August 27, 2019 – Jorge Cantu, C-6, made a presentation to City Council about the recycling world changing quickly.

August 30, 2019 – Republic Services notified C-6 that the agreement between C-6 and Republic will expire on September 30, 2019 and not be renewed. Effective on the expiration date, September 30, 2019, inbound C-6 recycling will be priced based upon the market rates.

September 10, 2019 – C-6 provided an update on the recycling challenge notifying the City of the cancellation of Republic's contract with C-6. Additionally, advising the City the rate C-6 will be charging the City is going to triple because C-6 costs are going to triple. The costs are going from \$20 to \$65 per ton to start out (October 1, 2019) and may increase from there on a month to month basis. C-6 had requested for a delay on implementation from Republic but it was denied.

The additional expense to the City to continue recycling will be \$386.40 per month starting October 1, 2019 with high probability of the recycling fee being adjusted monthly upward due to market conditions. There will be no caps on what will be charged for recycling. Council had four options: 1) continue weekly trash pickup and twice per month recycling with an increased fee of \$386.40 per month with possible increases on a month to month basis 2) continue weekly trash pickup and the recycling program but with only one recycling pick up per month with an increase of \$251.50 per month and possible increases 3) discontinue recycling but retain twice weekly trash pickup and the cost to the City would decline by a little over \$942 per year 4) City discontinue paying for the trash/recycling and C-6 bills individual

residences for twice weekly garbage collection with no recycling. Mayor Howard stated this subject wasn't addressed earlier because we didn't have the information at that time.

Mayor Howard stated a letter to the citizens was prepared on September 25, 2019 following the previous evenings Council Meeting. The letter outlined the trash/recycling actions and notified citizens that at the September 24, 2019 Council Meeting, the Council discussed at length the recycling issue and trash pickup weighing the options available, costs, what other cities were doing, and demands for limited City resources. After due consideration, the Council voted 4 to 1 to discontinue the program of the City paying for recycling and trash pickup. The implementation schedule was as follows: 1) October 2<sup>nd</sup> will be the last recycling pickup and C-6 will pick up recycling containers 2) January 1, 2020 individual residents will be billed directly by C-6. Mayor Hoard stated this letter was never sent because Council member Darst asked to rescind her vote and requested a Special Council Meeting to readdress. In addition, Council member Nottingham requested a Special Council Meeting on this subject. Council was under a time constraint of October 1<sup>st</sup> and had to act. Council did recognize that there are some citizens that might have a difficult time paying for their trash pickup and was going to put in place a program to help elevate that burden. It was a very difficult decision for Council. He then called for a Special Council Meeting to honor the Council members request.

Mayor Howard provided a handout on Waste Disposal Today that Council member Verity provided that discusses how waste management companies across the country are telling towns, cities, and counties that there is no longer a market for recycling. The municipalities have two choices: pay much higher rates to get rid of recycling or throw it all away.

Mayor Howard provided a handout out of the 2019 City Income prepared by Council member Verity. The City Income for 2019 is \$949,466 with expenses of \$1,028,850. Additional extensive expenses within the past years include a new roof/building renovation of the Community Center, legal expenses and the City Boundary Survey.

There was lengthy Council discussion with citizen input.

Council member Nottingham stated everything you read says the majority of what you put in the recycling bin is going into a landfill. Some is being shipped overseas but is ending up in a river or the ocean. If the City goes with once a week trash pickup, it could save the City money. She voted against the City discontinuing the City paid trash program and feels the action was wrong.

Council member Poss stated they were trying to be good stewards with the City's money. The decision to pay City trash pickup was made many, many years ago. She believes it was a good decision at the time but in this day and time, we have to look at things a little differently. Council was looking at the income vs. expenses and the numbers weren't matching up. The City provides a tremendous number of perks which does make the City unique however, the incredible natural beauty of Grey Forest is what really makes this place unique. Council member Poss stated she favors once a week pickup so that we can put the little money back.

Council member Darst made the motion to discontinue recycling but keep the existing trash pickup of twice weekly, Option #3. The motion was seconded by Council member Nottingham and passed with 4 YES and 1 OPPOSED by Council member Poss.

Council agreed they would like to study if twice weekly pickup is needed.

There was no further business. Mayor Howard adjourned the Special Council Meeting at 7:46 p.m.

These minutes were written/recorded by Shawn Kinsley.

These minutes were approved as ~~written~~ amended on the 26th day of November, 2019.

Signed: Phillip A. Howard  
Phillip A. Howard, Mayor